United Nations

Daily Highlights

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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Continuing their visit to Japan, Secretary-General and Mrs. Boutros-Ghali have audience with Emperor and Empress of Japan; Secretary-General meets with former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone and Defence Minister Kazuo Aichi, amongst others.

+ Secretary-General to convene preliminary meeting between Government of Guatemala and Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca from 6 to 9 January 1994 in Mexico; meeting follows suspension of peace talks last May.

+ Parties to conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina meet in Geneva today under auspices of Co-Chairmen of International Conference on Former Yugoslavia; to continue discussions tomorrow in Brussels.

+ Security Council last night extended mandate of United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda for six months, welcoming substantial results obtained since Mission's inception in June.

+ General Assembly yesterday created post of United Nations High Commissoner for Human Rights; to be Organization's principal official charged with helping prevent human rights violations.

+ Secretary-General calls for global ratification of United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change; treaty now set to enter into force in March 1994.

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Continuing their visit to Japan, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and Mrs. Boutros-Ghali today were received in audience by their Majesties the Emperor and Empress of Japan. According to a United Nations spokesman, the Secretary-General then attended a luncheon given in his honour by the United Nations Association (UNA) of Japan, after which he was paid a courtesy call by Justice Shigeru Oda of the International Court of Justice.

(more)

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Later in the day he received Yohei Kono, President of the Liberal Democratic Party. The Secretary-General then received former Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone, who has agreed to serve as a member of the Advisory Council for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. The Secretary-General stated his desire that Japan play a greater role in the United Nations, and they discussed the question of a permanent seat for Japan on the Security Council. The Secretary-General then met with Kazuo Aichi, Minister of State for Defence. Concluding the day, the Secretary-General attended a reception hosted by the President of the Upper House of the Diet, Bunbei Hara, and the Speaker of the Lower House, Takako Doi.

Tomorrow the Secretary-General leaves Japan for an official visit to the Republic of Korea.

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Based on consultations with the Government of Guatemala and the Unidad Revolucionaría Nacional Guatemalteca (URNG), Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has decided to convene a preliminary meeting between the parties from 6 to 9 January 1994 in Mexico. A United Nations spokesman said today that the Secretary-General expected the meeting to be an opportunity for both parties to make a determined effort to get the peace process back on track and to offer to the Guatemalan people clear prospects for an early and fair settlement of the 30-year armed conflict in their country.

In October, the Government of Guatemala and URNG asked the Secretary-General to organize a preliminary meeting on modalities for resuming their peace negotiations, which were suspended last May. In the framework of the Secretary-General's good offices, bilateral consultations were held in November and December with the parties at United Nations Headquarters in New York. On that occasion they confirmed their willingness to resume their talks and to show flexibility in devising a negotiating format, taking into account agreements reached and progress already made in the peace process.

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The parties to the conflict in Bosnia and Herzegovina met in Geneva today under the auspices of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia, Thorvald Stoltenberg and Lord Owen. On the agenda was the question of additional territory for a Muslim republic, including access to the sea. Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic and Croatian President Franjo Tudjman both participated in the talks. They met separately with the Co-Chairmen and then together.

The spokesman for the Co-Chairmen said that much "quiet diplomacy" and private meetings had gone into preparing for today's meeting and for tomorrow's talks in Brussels, which he said should be seen as a continuation of today's. He said the talks were perceived as part of "a united effort to end this war which has gone on far too long".

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The Security Council last night decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission Uganda-Rwanda (UNOMUR) for a period of six months. Welcoming the substantial results obtained by the Mission since its inception in June 1993 and in particular the decrease in clandestine cross-border traffic, the Council unanimously adopted resolution 891 (1993).

By another part of the text, the Council noted that the integration of UNOMUR within the United Nations Assistance Mission in Rwanda (UNAMIR) was purely administrative and that it would in no way affect the mandate of UNOMUR. The Council expressed its appreciation to the Government of Uganda for its cooperation and support for UNOMUR and also underlined the importance of a cooperative attitude on the part of the civilian and military authorities in the Mission area.

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The Secretary-General will appoint the High Commissioner, to be approved by the Assembly, to serve a four-year term at the rank of Under-Secretary-General. He or she will coordinate the Organization's human rights activities and supervise the Centre for Human Rights, through which advisory services and assistance would be provided to States upon request.

Adoption of the resolution, heralded by many speakers as a turning point in the history of United Nations action in the human rights arena, was the culmination of a process initiated at the World Conference on Human Rights held in Vienna in June.

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In anticipation of the entry into force of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change next March, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today called for global adherence to the treaty and support for its rapid implementation. He said that protecting the climate would require cooperation by all countries and that the Convention offered a framework for such action.

At the June 1992 Rio "Earth Summit", he said, there was an extraordinary display of political commitment as over 150 Heads of State and other senior national representatives signed the newly-finalized treaty. With the threshold of 50 ratifications now met, the Convention would enter into force on 21 March 1994.

"If scientific predictions came true," he continued, "our children and grandchildren will live in a world of higher temperatures and changed climate patterns. Droughts, floods, storms, and other climate and weather extremes may become more frequent. People living in risky or marginal areas would swell the ranks of refugees, and social and political tensions would worsen as competition for water and other scarce resources intensified. This extra pressure would make it even more difficult to solve the kinds of problems and crises that we already face today."

(more)

Mr. Boutros-Ghali stressed that it was necessary to improve scientific and technical understanding of the causes and impact of climate change and of the various options for responding to it. The fundamental aim, he said, was for industrialized and industrializing societies to shift to sustainable patterns of production and consumption that would protect the national and global environment, while improving the well-being of their people.

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